



MASSACHUSETTS VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

June 2003

PREAMBLE

We, the Veterans' Service Officers, Burial Agents, Directors, Commissioners and/or staffs of the Department of Veterans' Services in municipalities and Veterans' Districts of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by agreement and organization do hereby unite and cooperate to establish a permanent Association for the purpose hereinafter set forth, and do ordain and establish the following constitution and by-laws for the governing of this Association.

ARTICLE I

Title

This Association shall be known as the Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association, Inc.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The Purpose of the Association is:

1. To promote closer association and better acquaintance of all Veterans' Service Officers and their staff;
2. To promote a similar better acquaintance and closer operational harmony between all Veterans' Service Officers, the municipal chiefs executive offices, Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, and other Veterans' Organizations;
3. To promote the development of greater efficacy and efficiency in the administration of veterans' benefits laws and regulations, wherein a better service can be rendered to veterans and/or their dependents;
4. To sponsor and encourage the passage of any and all legislation benefiting veterans and/or veterans' dependents.

ARTICLE III
Officers and Elections

- Section 1. The business and administrative affairs of this Association shall, except as may be otherwise provided by the By-laws, be under the supervision of an Executive Board which shall consist of the following members:
- 1) four (4) elected officers
 - 2) thirteen (13) elected executive board members
 - 3) four (4) area Association's presidents or their designee
(i.e. Northeast, Southeast, Worcester, and Western Veterans' Service Officers Associations or their successors)
 - 4) four (4) appointed officers -- Secretary/Treasurer, Budget/Finance Officer, Legal Officer and Legislative Agent each of whom shall be appointed by the president
 - 5) all past presidents
- Section 2. The Elected Officers of this Association shall be President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Thirteen Executive Board Members who shall serve a one- (1) year term commencing and ending at the Annual Meeting.
- Section 3. The Ex-officio Members of the Executive Board shall be:
Four area Association presidents or their designee;
Secretary/Treasurer, Budget/Finance Officer, Legal Officer and
Legislative Agent each of whom shall be appointed by the president; and
all past presidents who shall have the right to attend and participate in all discussions of the Executive Board.
- Section 5. The President of the Association shall be chairperson of the Executive Board, and the Secretary of the Association shall act as Secretary of the said Committee.
- Section 6. The Executive Board shall meet at least quarterly and the President shall determine the time and place of said meetings. Special meeting(s) of the Executive Board may be called by the President or by written request of at least five members of said Executive Board directed to the Secretary, and in such case it shall be the duty of the Secretary to give due notice thereof.
- Section 6. It shall be the duty of the Executive Board, by a majority vote of those present, to fill all vacancies in any office. They shall see that all funds are safely deposited and expended. A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- Section 7. All officers shall be duly nominated and elected at the Annual Meeting and shall serve for one year or until such time as their successors are duly installed.

Section 8. Any member of this Association who is an officer or executive board member of said Association and misses three consecutive meetings may have their office declared vacant by the President of the Association and that office shall be filled according to the Association By-Laws.

Section 9. Any elected officer and ex-officio member may be removed from office by a 2/3rds vote of the executive board present and voting.

ARTICLE IV Duties of Officers

ELECTED OFFICERS

President

Section 1. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings, including the Executive Board.

Section 2. The president shall appoint at least two members of the Association to serve as a Budget/Finance Officer, which shall audit the books of the secretary-treasurer. The said committee shall present a written report of the same at the annual meeting.

Section 3. The president shall submit at the annual meeting a written report of the president's stewardship during his/her term of office, with such recommendations for the good of the Association, as the president may deem proper.

Section 4. The President shall receive a stipend as shown in Attachment "A"

Vice-Presidents

Section 1. The Association shall have two Vice-Presidents who shall be called First Vice-President and second Vice-President

Section 2. In the absence of the President, the First or second Vice-President shall assume the duties of the president.

Section 3. The Vice Presidents shall discharge the duties as given to them by the president and / or the Executive Board

Sergeant-At-Arms

- Section 1. It shall be the duty of the Sergeant-At-Arms;
- a) to see that all business meetings of the Association be attended only by members of the Association, both duly paid and honorary;
 - b) b) to maintain proper decorum at all meetings;
 - c) lead the Pledge of Allegiance at all meetings

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Secretary-Treasurer

- Section 1. The office of Secretary-Treasurer shall be appointive. It shall be the duty of the Secretary-Treasurer to keep a complete record of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting and all meetings of the Association and Executive Board, to receive and answer all communications. All notices of meetings shall be given by the Secretary-Treasurer. The Secretary-Treasurer shall receive and spend (with prior authorization) all monies belonging to the Association. The Secretary-Treasurer shall make a full report at all General Meetings, executive board meetings and at such other times as called upon by the President of all monies received and disbursed. On demand of the Budget/Finance Officer or Committee or the President or (Acting President), the secretary-treasurer shall exhibit all papers, books and vouchers, when they desire to audit the same.
- Section 2. That the stipend for the Secretary-Treasurer of the Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association shall be as shown in Attachment A "Schedule of Stipends" In the event the appointed Secretary-Treasurer is ill and unable to perform the duties of said office, the acting Secretary-Treasurer shall receive the stipend on a monthly basis.

Budget/Finance Officer

- Section 1. It shall be the duties of the Budget/Finance Officer to
- a) Audit the financial transactions of the Association prior to each General Meeting and report to the membership the condition of the Associations finances.
 - b) Review with the Secretary-Treasurer all requests for expenditures outside the normal budget process and make recommendations to the Executive Committee.

- c) Prepare prior to the end of each fiscal year an annual budget for the forthcoming fiscal year to be presented to the Executive Board for their approval.

Section 2. Expenditures, other than emergency, must receive approval from the executive board who should first review any recommendation of the Secretary-Treasurer and Budget/Finance Officer.

Legal Officer

Section 1. It shall be the duty of the Legal Officer to assist this Association, the executive board, and all committees, if called upon.

Legislative Agent

Section 1. It shall be the duties of the Legislative Agent to

- a) represent the Association in all legislative matters;
- b) attend all hearings on bills the Association has taken a position pro or con;
- c) attend all general meetings, executive board meetings and legislative committee meetings

Section 2. That the stipend for the Legislative Agent of the Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association shall be as shown in Attachment A "Schedule of Stipends" In the event the appointed Legislative Agent is ill and unable to perform the duties of said office, the acting Legislative Agent shall receive the stipend on a monthly basis.

ARTICLE V General Meetings

Section 1. There shall be three general meetings of the Association as follows:

- a) A Convention-type, multiple-day meeting to be held in the winter to be known as the Winter Conference
- b) A Convention-type, multiple-day meeting in the spring, to be known as the Annual Meeting, for the election of Officers, in accordance with the present By-Laws.
- c) A One day only-type Meeting to be held in the Fall to be known as the Legislative Conference at which time any proposed legislation will be presented for endorsement in addition to any other business pertaining to the Association.

- Section 2. Thirty (30) members at any general meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- Section 3. A program of events or items of business, including speakers who may impart some knowledge on the particular work of the Association, shall be provided by the President for each meeting and the President shall see that due notification is mailed to each member in advance of each meeting in the form of an Agenda. At all meetings, time shall be allotted to members for general discussion and an expression of ideas for the General Welfare of the Association.

ARTICLE VI

Standing Committees

- Section 1. The President of the Association shall appoint all Standing Committees and such other committees, as he or the Executive Board deems necessary.
- Section 2. The standing committees shall be;
- a) Legislative Committee which shall have charge of all matters pertaining to legislation, shall keep themselves informed on all proposed changes in the statutes relating to Veterans' Benefits and shall be empowered to act for the Association on all matters before the State Legislature as may be otherwise provided by these By-Laws. Only those legislative proposals endorsed by the majority of the members at any of the three general meetings or by the majority of the executive board shall be officially endorsed favorably or unfavorably by this Association or any of its members

- b) Nominating/Balloting Committee, which shall be composed of members in good standing who are not candidates for an office or the executive board. At the annual meeting, the nominating committee shall prepare a ballot for the election of Officers and the members of the executive board. In all contested elections, voting shall be by a secret written ballot of the membership present and in attendance at the time of said vote. The nominating committee shall act as a balloting committee in the event of a contest for office. Regardless of the number of candidates for an office, the candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be duly elected.
- c) Advisory Committee, which shall be comprised of the four (4) Officers of the Association and other members of the Association as appointed by the president. The advisory committee shall meet periodically with the Commissioner and staff of the Department Of Veterans Services' to discuss items under the direction of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VII

Membership

Section 1. The following persons shall be eligible for membership upon sending their names to the Secretary-Treasurer and upon payment of the Annual dues.

- a) Veterans Service Officers
- b) Veterans Agents
- c) Graves Registration Officer
- d) The Director of Veterans' Services
- e) Burial Agent
- f) Staff
- g) Life-Time Honorary

Of any city or town in Massachusetts or any district established in accordance with chapter 115 MGLA

Section 2. Any member of good standing is entitled to all of the privileges of the Association except Honorary Lifetime and/or Associate Members who shall be limited by the sections following.

Section 3. Any active member of the Association in good standing, upon retirement or termination without cause and upon a vote of the Association at any meeting, shall be considered an Honorary Lifetime Member. Such Honorary Lifetime Member shall continue to be entitled to all the privileges of the Association except he/she shall not hold any elective or appointive office. Said Honorary Lifetime Member may serve on all

committees, subject to appointment by the President.

- Section 4. The membership of any member may be suspended or revoked for misconduct or acts deemed to be detrimental or not in the best interest of the Association upon the written complaint of any dues-paying member of the Association, subject to two-thirds vote of the members of the Executive Board or the members at a general meeting present and voting.
- Section 5. Members of any veteran's organization shall be eligible to be an Associate Member upon payment of the annual dues for an associate membership. Said Associate Member shall be entitled to all privileges of the Association except they may not vote nor hold elective or appointive office.

ARTICLE VIII

Dues

- Section 1. The annual dues shall be as shown in Schedule of Annual Dues, Attachment A to these By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX

Seal

This Association shall have a common seal, circular in form, bearing the words "Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association, Inc.", and a "Massachusetts Minuteman" inside said circle. Said seal to remain in the custody of the Secretary/Treasurer.

ARTICLE X

Method Of Voting

The business of this organization other than the election of officers and members of the executive board shall be transacted by viva voce (by voice).

Elections shall be by Australian Ballot (i.e. Written, confidential ballots). Persons designated by the President, as an "Election Committee" shall supervise the election whom are not candidates for any position in dispute on the ballot. The "Election Committee" shall report results of the election in any form as designated by the president.

ARTICLE XI
Rules of Order

All proceedings of this Association shall be conducted under and pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, except as herein otherwise provided.

ARTICLE XII
Amendments

This Association shall have the power to amend these By-Laws at any General Association meeting by vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting such general meeting providing that the substance of the proposed amendment has been mailed to each member at least seven days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XIII
Attachments

Attachments to these BY-LAWS reflect information, which is transitory in nature and may be modified by a vote of the General Membership or the Executive Board without necessity of the formal process of modifying the BY-LAWS themselves.

Attachment A

Schedule of Annual Dues

a) Full membership	\$35.00
b) Honoree lifetime member	\$10.00
c) Associate member	\$10.00
d) Staff members	\$10.00

Schedule of Stipends

Stipends shall be paid to the following Association Officers as Indicated:

President, Legislative Agent, and Secretary-Treasurer shall each receive a monthly stipend of \$75.00 for a total of \$900.00/year for each officer. The pay of \$2,700.00 for these three officers shall be considered into the Annual Budget of the Association. The payment may be made prospectively as an annual payment.

